

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Flying Speed of Twenty-eight Parrot.—While travelling from Perth to Albany by ear on January 15, 1950 we flushed a flock of Twenty-eight Parrots (*Barnardius zonarius*). The ear was travelling at 45 m.p.h. and, after flying parallel to us for about a quarter of a mile, the parrots drew ahead and swung away. To do this they must have been doing over 45 m.p.h.

—DON REID, Wembley.

Rock Parrots near Fremantle.—During the excursion of the Western Australian Naturalists' Club to Leighton on July 9, 1950, a flock of eight Rock Parrots (*Neophema petrophila*) was seen at the North Mole. Later at the Leighton dump I saw another parrot and Mr. W. H. Butler saw a flock of five.

—DON REID, Wembley.

Australian Dotterel at Bunjil.—A "small plover" was reported as being present near Bunjil, but I did not attach due importance to this information until a clutch of three eggs, taken from a nest destroyed during ploughing operations, was brought to me. These appear to be assignable to the Australian Dotterel (*Peltohyas australis*).

Dr. D. L. Serventy, after examining the eggs, passed them to Mr. I. C. Carnaby, who provided the following dimensions:—No. 1, 35 mm. x 27 mm.; No. 2, 36 mm. x 28 mm.; No. 3, 34 mm. x 29 mm.; average, 35 mm. x 28 mm.

—ERIC H. SEDGWICK, Leonora.

Senegal Turtle dove at Dangin.—On January 28, 1951, I observed a party of Senegal Turtle doves (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) at Dangin (east of York and 100 miles from Perth). They were quietly feeding under a pepper tree (*Schinus molle*) and although I only saw four, there were probably more in the flock. These birds have definitely arrived since 1945, when I was living in the district, and a local resident informs me they were present at the end of 1949. The nearest locality recorded by Serventy and Whittell in *Birds of Western Australia* as being invaded by the species is Beverley, 25 miles away.

—L. E. SEDGWICK, Wooroloo.

Recent Records of the Oarfish.—The Oarfish (*Regalecus glesne*)—a long slender ribbon-shaped fish, silvery in colour with a bright red crest and long red dorsal fin extending almost to the tiny tail; long slender pelvic fins broadened at the tip (hence the name Oarfish)—is rarely met with in Western Australian waters.

It is of interest to record, therefore, that no fewer than four individuals have been seen in the South-west during December, 1950. A mutilated specimen in a dying condition was seen on a reef on Rottnest, two living specimens have been caught in Geo-

graphe Bay and one, in a decomposed condition, has been reported from Cape Leeuwin. It is possible that further examples of this strange deep-sea fish have been cast upon our shores unnoticed.

The Oarfish may reach a length of over 20 feet and weigh 5 cwt. It is known to occur in the Indian, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and has now and again been mistaken for a sea serpent.

—L. GLAUERT, W.A. Museum, Perth.

Flocking of Willie Wagtails (*Rhipidura leucophrys*).—It is a very pretty sight on a very windy day to see a flock of Wagtails hopping and fluttering into the wind. These flocks, which are only seen during the non-breeding season, have interested me for some years. Any time between February and September on a *windy day* one may see these small flocks of up to 20 birds feeding into the wind. They appear to be made up of young birds or unattached birds and though they may feed across the territory of resident pairs they meet with little resistance as a rule. The resident pairs are inclined to stand aloof though half-hearted attacks are made at times. It is probable that most of the birds are the young from a number of resident pairs and have not become territory conscious, but there do appear to be a few small flocks of travelling birds in February-March, which tend to travel southwards. This year flocking was still seen during the stormy weather of the first week of October.

—ANGUS ROBINSON, Coolup.

Food Washing by Common Sandpiper.—On a sandy beach, with some rocks, to the east of Point John, near Roekingham, I was watching a Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*) when it obtained an item of food from a pile of seaweed and, before swallowing it, washed it at the water's edge.

Food washing has been recorded in a number of waders as a result of an enquiry commenced through *British Birds*, vol. 39, 1946. Several of these waders are on the Australian list, or are represented by nearly allied forms, so the following list of species concerned may be of interest:—Oyster-catcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), Grey Plover (*Squatarola squatarola*), Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), Whimbrel (*N. phaeopus*), Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*), Bar-tailed Godwit (*L. lapponica*), Common Sandpiper (*Tringa hypoleucos*), Greenshank (*T. nebularia*), Redshank (*T. totanus*), Green Sandpiper (*T. ochropus*), Curlew-Sandpiper (*Calidris testacea*), Dunlin (*C. alpina*) and Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*). A second record of food-washing by a Common Sandpiper was published recently in *British Birds*, vol. 43, p. 229.

I note that most records of food-washing have been made where birds were feeding on mud-flats.

—ERIC H. SEDGWICK, Leonora.